

In the Footsteps of a Soldier Girl by glorious_spoon

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Gen, Multi

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Dustin Henderson & Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-02-18

Updated: 2018-02-18

Packaged: 2022-04-21 15:08:30

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,575

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

“Hey, look, you fought off interdimensional scorpion monsters while you were in labor. That’s about as badass as it gets, right?”

Or: this was not how Nancy had planned it.

In the Footsteps of a Soldier Girl

Author's Note:

So, a couple of people commented on [this fic](#) that they'd like to see more pregnant Stoncy. And of course, that turned into a very pregnant Nancy fighting off monsters, because why not. Enjoy!

"Give me the gun," Nancy says, peering out through the boarded-up window at the dark-colored, vaguely insectoid creatures prowling the yard. There are more of them than there were earlier; she doesn't know if they can smell them, or sense heat, if they're communicating with each other or *what*, but she's pretty sure that the makeshift barricades won't keep them out for long if they decide to charge the cabin. And it's looking like they might.

Dustin peers at her. "Really? But, I mean, you're like..." He lifts his arms, winces, and then describes a vague round arc over his midsection with his left hand. His right arm dangles at a skewed angle, the sleeve wet with blood from one of the things' teeth. "Huge. I mean. Is that safe?"

"Safer than you trying to shoot with a broken arm," Nancy snaps, and holds out her hand. She'll let the 'huge' crack slide for now. They're in a high stress situation, and it is kind of, a little bit true. "Give it to me. Now."

Dustin opens his mouth, then shuts it, shakes his head, and hands over the shotgun. Nancy sets the butt against her shoulder, straightens as much as she can. There's a low, deep ache building at the base of her spine that she's doing her best to ignore; for the last couple of weeks, it's been impossible to find a position that *doesn't* make her back hurt, and spending eight hours on the cold floor of an empty cabin while monsters prowl outside is not helping the situation.

"Do you see Joyce?" she asks.

Dustin leans over her to peer out through the slats of the boarded-up

windows. “No. You don’t think she—”

“She’s fine,” Nancy interrupts before he can finish the sentence, hoping like hell that it’s true. It’s probably true. They would have heard something if she was attacked. Probably. “She’ll be back any minute now.”

“If Hopper and the others manage to kill the queen—”

“They’ll let us know,” Nancy says. “Now shut up. I’m trying to listen.”

Dustin shuts his mouth with a snap, looking slightly hurt. Nancy grimaces, belatedly sorry for the sharpness of her tone. Before she can say anything, though, there’s a scrabbling sound outside, dry claws scraping against the wooden slats.

“Shit,” Dustin whispers. “You don’t think they can dig, do you?”

“How the hell should I know?” Nancy hisses back. “They look like giant scorpions. Can scorpions dig?”

“I mean, some species,” Dustin whispers. “But these aren’t scorpions. They have teeth.”

“Must you be so pedantic?” Of course he must. He’s Dustin. And he’s holding it together pretty well, considering that one of those things snapped his arm like so much dry firewood and it’s got to be hurting like hell right now. They immobilized it as best they could with his sweatshirt before Joyce went to get the car, but still—

Another scrape, then the sound of wood cracking.

“Shit, *shit*,” Dustin hisses. “That’s right under us, get back—”

His good hand is on her shoulder, hauling her up with surprising strength; even though he’s been taller than her for years now, on some level she’ll always think of him, of all of them, as soft, shrimpy little kids. Nancy sways against him, wincing and off-balance, and then they’re stumbling backward toward the far wall, Dustin’s hand tight on her arm. She braces the shotgun against her shoulder, pumps the forestock and takes aim as the floor cracks where they were just standing and a gleaming black carapace bursts through.

The old Mossberg thunders in the small space and the creature makes a noise like nails on a chalkboard, jerking back against the splintered boards. Pincers as long as baseball bats clack together, and then it heaves itself fully into the room, balancing on ten sharply pointed legs, stinger arching over its long, chitinous form. One eyestalk is dangling, leaking dark-colored gore; the other swivels independently, then fixes on them. It starts forward. Nancy pumps the shotgun and fires again.

This time, the slug blows right through the center of its carapace in a spray of blood, and it collapses sideways into the hole. Before she can even begin to feel relieved, though, it starts to twitch and jerk. It's not moving, she realizes, after a panicked moment. There's another one behind it, pushing the dead monster upward as it ascends. Another set of claws emerges from below, gripping the broken edges of the floorboards.

"Oh *fuck*," Dustin hisses, his fingers digging into her arm. "How many of them are there?"

"I don't know!" She pumps the shotgun again as the second monster begins to heave itself out from under its dead brethren. Iron slugs kill these things, at least, but the problem is, she's only got about a dozen more rounds in the pocket of her sweatshirt. They weren't expecting to have to take cover here. It was supposed to be a goddamn day at the lake, not World War Three.

She blows a hole in the center mass of the second monster and it collapses, but there's definitely more scrabbling outside. A *lot* more.

"Shit, shit, shit," Dustin says beside her as a third set of claws begin to dig their way out of the mass of dead monster. Nancy sets the gun against her shoulder, waiting for it to emerge, willing herself to calmness. She can't afford to waste the ammo on anything other than a kill shot—

A car horn blares outside, then the sound of squealing tires, a heavy impact.

"Joyce?" Nancy says out loud.

The roar of an engine, and then another impact. The thing that was trying to come up through the floor withdraws, and scrabbles away underneath the cabin; Nancy exchanges a worried glance with Dustin, then stands awkwardly, resting one hand on her rounded belly and holding the gun with the other. The baby is kicking like crazy. From the gunshots, probably. That can't have been good for him.

Better than being eaten by giant interdimensional scorpions, though. All things considered.

"Shh, hush," she murmurs, rubbing at what feels like a foot lodged under her ribs, and skirts the hole in the floor to peer out the window.

The headlights of Hopper's Blazer swing across the packed dirt out front as Joyce accelerates toward another of the monsters; Nancy can see her small frame hunched over the wheel. The monster goes flying with a sickening crunch into one of the trees, but there are more of them now, converging on the big Chevy as she backs up and swings around to accelerate again. Not just the four that they dodged on their way in; dozens of them pouring out of the dark woods.

"She's not gonna be able to—" Dustin starts.

"Hush," Nancy says. "Something's happening."

The nearest monster wobbles, then stumbles and falls flat on its belly — midsection— whatever the hell these things have, legs splayed out under it. Then another, and another; one crashes into a tree, another stumbles directly into the path of the Blazer as Joyce spins it around, doesn't even attempt to dodge, and goes down in a splatter of gore and chunks of chitinous shell.

"The queen," Dustin whispers. She glances over at him; his eyes are huge and round, his fingers gripping the window frame. "They must have got the queen."

Nancy nods, still peering out the window. The baby kicks her, a sharp jab at her diaphragm, and that low, unpleasant ache is starting up at the base of her spine again. Outside the window, the last of the

monsters has collapsed into an ungainly sprawl. Joyce puts the Blazer in park, and then pushes the door open and climbs out onto the packed dirt. She has a pistol in one hand and a radio in the other.

“—think it worked,” she’s saying, spinning slowly in place, gun out. “Hop, I think it worked.”

The radio hisses, but Nancy can’t make out the words. Joyce shakes her head, makes another slow turn, then kicks at one of the motionless creatures with a sneaker-clad foot. “I don’t know,” she says, shading her eyes against the low light of the setting sun and peering up toward the cabin. “I’m going to check right now.”

And then she’s kicking a severed claw out of the way, climbing up the steps that lead up to the cabin’s narrow porch. She pounds on the door. “Nancy? Dustin? Are you still— are you okay?”

“We’re okay, Mrs. Byers!” Dustin calls. He gives Nancy a wan, relieved grin, then crosses to start dismantling the barricade in front of the door. Nancy sets the gun down, pushes a fist into the ache at the base of her spine, and goes to help him.

“Let me do that,” she says, shoving Dustin aside as he tries to pull the couch back one-handed.

“You’re pregnant,” he protests.

“You have a broken arm,” she retorts. “Idiot.” Then, raising her voice slightly, “Joyce, we’re both fine, we’re in here and we’re both fine.”

“Oh, thank God,” Joyce says, on an explosive sigh. And then, into the radio, “Hop, boys, they’re okay. They’re both okay.”

A chorus of staticky half-anxious laughter, and then someone— she thinks it’s Jonathan— says, “Thank fucking Christ.”

With a grunt, Nancy finally manages to shoulder the couch out of the way enough to get to the door latch, and lifts it. Joyce pushes the door in as she’s pulling it open, yanks her into a tight hug. “Oh, sweetheart, I was so worried, I’m so glad you’re okay— Dustin, how’s your arm?”

“Still broken,” Dustin says lightly, but his face is grayish and pained in the light coming in through the open door, enough to make Nancy feel a twinge of guilt for being so short with him earlier.

“They got the queen, the coast should be clear—” Joyce stops, like she’s just now noticed the gaping hole in the floor, the two dead monsters collapsed inside it. “Oh, my god.”

“Yeah, it was pretty close,” Dustin says. He socks Nancy’s shoulder lightly. “You should have seen Nancy, she was *badass*.”

“Oh, my god,” Joyce says again, pulling Dustin into the hug as well. “We should get you to a hospital, sweetheart. You need to be in a hospital. That was a really bad break.”

“I have no arguments with that,” Dustin says, slightly muffled in her hair. “I’m really looking forward to the good drugs, let me tell you.”

Over the radio, Steve says, “It’s probably just going to be Codeine, man, sorry.”

“Oh, yeah, thanks, just crush all my hopes and dreams, why don’t you,” Dustin says, half-laughing, and lets go of them. Joyce pats his cheek gently, like they’re all still kids, like he’s *her* kid, and her face is soft and relieved as she clips the radio to her belt and steps back.

“Come on,” she says, “let’s get you... Nancy?”

Nancy waves a hand at her, gripping the back of the couch with her other hand. “I’m okay, it’s just... cramp.”

She pushes the heel of her hand into her back muscles, trying to massage the ache out, but it doesn’t help. She’s really starting to get sick of this. Steve and Jonathan are all moony over the idea of finally getting to meet the baby, and yeah, maybe Nancy spent a week or two or three making sure that the nursery was perfect, shopping for baby clothes with her mom, but right now, she’s looking forward to it just being *over*. Aches and pains and heartburn and getting kicked in the diaphragm while she’s trying to sleep, and she is just... so done.

Soon. Two weeks.

Finally, finally, the cramp releases. She lifts her head, straightens up. "Sorry. Let's go."

Dustin's already by the door, but Joyce is still staring at her. "Nancy," she says slowly. "Honey."

"What?"

Joyce's expression is very strange. "Has it... have they been coming and going?"

"Yeah," Nancy says, after a moment. She knows, suddenly, exactly where Joyce is going with this. "But it's not, I'm not..."

Two weeks. She has *two weeks*, goddamn it.

By the door, Dustin whispers, half reverent and half-fearful, "Holy shit."

"How far apart?" Joyce asks.

"I don't, I'm not—" Nancy waves a hand at the hole in the floor, the dead monsters, the gun and shell casings and the smears of ash from the flamethrower they were using until they ran out of fuel. "I wasn't keeping track, I was a little fucking distracted, okay?"

Her voice sounds high and tight to her own ears, almost panicked, and she *hates* this. This isn't how it was supposed to go. She was supposed to be home in bed with Steve and Jonathan, she was supposed to have candles and soft music and her OB on the phone to talk her through it, to tell her when to come in, not monsters and blood and, and—

There's another cramp building at the base of her spine. She breathes in, slow across her teeth, fingers gripping the back of the couch, digging into the worn fabric.

"Okay," Joyce says, and her hand is on Nancy's shoulder blade, a soothing anchor. Joyce can be brittle and erratic and difficult sometimes, but right now there's no sign of that. Right now, she's just... steady. "Okay. Just breathe through it, you'll be fine. Dustin, here, radio the others, tell them to meet us at the hospital."

“Holy shit,” Dustin breathes again, and then, off of Joyce’s look, “right, yeah, sorry.” He thumbs the dial, one-handed, and says into the radio, “Hey, so, you guys should get to the hospital. Steve and Jonathan specifically, I mean. You should get there. Now.”

There’s a moment of hissing silence, and then Steve’s voice, sounding concerned. “Dustin, man, are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Dustin says. His eyes are huge and anxious in a way that makes him look closer to thirteen than twenty-three. “Um, I mean, my arm is still broken and it actually hurts like a sonuvabitch. But I’m pretty sure Nancy is in labor, so, yeah.”

“What?” Steve says, and then, “you gotta be *fucking* kidding me,” and there’s a rustle, a burst of muffled profanity from Jonathan, and then Hopper’s voice on the line.

“We’re on our way,” he says calmly. “Hang in there, both of you.”

She manages to get down to the Blazer under her own power, thankfully, but another contraction hits as she’s climbing into the backseat, and she has to cling grimly to the seat in front of her, curled in around her enormous belly.

“Breathe,” Joyce says gently, climbing into the driver’s seat and pulling the door shut behind her. Dustin is already perched on the far end of the bench seat, cradling his injured arm and watching her like she’s a bomb that might go off at any moment.

“I’m *trying* to,” Nancy hisses through her teeth, but she makes herself take a breath. It doesn’t help at all with the pain, but after another moment, the contraction subsides, and she manages to make herself straighten out enough to buckle her seatbelt.

“Uh,” Dustin says, as Joyce starts the car and pulls out onto the dirt road, leaving the clearing full of dead monsters behind them. “Are you okay?”

“Fine,” Nancy says shortly. It’s true, at the moment. For the next few minutes. “How’s your arm?”

"It hurts a lot," Dustin says frankly. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"I'm having a baby in the backseat of a fucking police SUV," Nancy snaps. She feels like she might actually cry, and the anxious concern in Dustin's face is not helping at all. He has a goddamn broken arm. Can't he just worry about himself and stop looking at her like she's going to snap in half, or start crying, or, or—

Goddamn it, her eyes are leaking. She swipes at them angrily. "Does that sound like 'okay' to you?"

Dustin doesn't answer, but after a minute or so, he unbuckles his seatbelt, scoots across until he's sitting next to her. He hesitates, then wraps his good arm around her shoulders. "Hey, look, you're gonna be fine. You're, like, the toughest person I know."

Nancy laughs wetly. "You're a really nice guy, Dustin. You know that?"

"I'll put it on my resume," Dustin says. She can tell he's smiling without even looking up, and his arm is solid around her shoulders, and when the hell did he grow up so much, anyway? She keeps expecting him to freak out or shove her off, make some kind of disgusted middle-schooler face, but he's just... solid. "Hey, look, you fought off interdimensional scorpion monsters while you were in labor. That's about as badass as it gets, right?"

She doesn't feel very badass right now. She feels, quite frankly, freaked the fuck out, way out of her depth, like she's stepped off of a ledge in the dark and is still in freefall, unsure of when or where she's going to land. But at least she's not alone.

They get to the hospital about five minutes before the others do. Dustin is sitting in a plastic chair and wincing while the triage nurse examines his arm and Nancy is hunched around another contraction, the clipboard with the intake papers resting on the tense curve of her belly and Joyce rubbing a soothing hand up and down her back, when the doors slam open in a gust of twilight-scented air.

"Nancy? Nancy!" Footsteps on the linoleum floor, and then Jonathan

is falling to his knees in front of her, reaching for her hands. His face is pale, his eyes huge. There's a smear of soot across his cheek. "Is everything— are you okay?"

"I'm," Nancy says, and swallows, and laughs. "I'm having a baby. We're having a baby."

And then Steve is there, too, sinking into the chair on her other side, curling a warm hand over her kneecap. Nancy tilts against him, tangling her fingers with Jonathan's. She's vaguely aware of Joyce letting go of her, standing up, murmuring something quiet that Hopper responds to in a low voice, but only vaguely.

Steve's arm goes around her, and Jonathan pulls himself up into Joyce's vacant chair without letting go of her hands, and they're here, they're both *here*. They smell awful, like blood and ashes and some sharply unpleasant stench, and Steve's uniform shirt is tacky beneath her cheek. As the pain abates, she straightens, manages to lift her head, and sees that it's blood.

"I'm okay," he says, when she looks up at him, wiping it off of her cheek. "Just flying debris. Nothing to worry about."

"He's going to need stitches," Jonathan translates, but he doesn't sound that worried. "How are you doing?"

"I'm," Nancy starts, then shakes her head. Hopper is standing a few feet away; there's soot on his uniform, too, something odd and unreadable in his face. Jane is a few paces behind him. She's the only one who looks completely unscathed, other than a dried smudge of blood beneath her nose. She slips around Hopper and Joyce to crouch down in front of the three of them. One pale, slender hand settles briefly on Nancy's belly.

"Baby," she says, lips quirking into a smile.

"Yeah," Nancy says. She'd rip almost anybody else's hand away, but Jane is... Jane is a special case, and not just because she's her sister-in-law in everything but name. "He's coming."

"Yes," Jane says. "Soon."

Before Nancy can respond to that, she smiles, and straightens. She touches Hopper's shoulder briefly, then crosses the room to sit down next to Dustin as the nurse flexes the fingers of his broken arm. Says something to him, and he laughs and responds; from where she's sitting, she can't hear the exchange.

"Nancy Wheeler?"

She looks up. There's a nurse there, and an orderly with a wheelchair, and it all suddenly seems sharply, strangely real. This is it.

"Oh," she says, looking at the wheelchair. "Do I just..."

"Eric will take you upstairs to Labor and Delivery, and they'll examine you and finish your intake there," the nurse says, smiling. She's middle-aged, bottle blonde, and as she looks them over, she adds, briskly, "So, which one of you is the daddy?"

Jonathan and Steve exchange glances.

"Um," Jonathan says, standing.

Steve stands too, reaching down to help Nancy up, and he's the one who says, very calmly, "We're both going with her."

His fingers are tight on hers, and Jonathan fumbles for her hand on her other side. The nurse looks them over, raises her eyebrows. "Ms. Wheeler?"

"Like he said," Nancy says. Her heart is pounding, and she can feel another contraction building, and she really doesn't want to have it out with some random nurse in the triage area of the ER, but she'll do it if she has to. She's faced off against much scarier things today than one potentially judgemental triage nurse. "They're both coming with me."

The nurse— Nancy can't read her name tag from here— seems about to say something, then shakes her head. Smiles, astonishingly. "Okay. That's up to you. If that's what you want—"

"It is," Nancy says firmly.

“Then let’s get you on your way,” the nurse says. Jonathan lets out an explosive breath, and Steve laughs quietly, and together they help her into the wheelchair.